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AUTHOR Robertson, J. D.
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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet is the eighth in a series of ten stemming from the view that language is central to learning, that teachers can gain insights into their work and into learning by examining the language of the classroom, and that current language theory can be the means to such insights. The pamphlet contains a discussion of the uses of language in the spectator role. It discusses make-believe play and the reading of fairy tales, novels, drama, and poetry as examples of this role and contends that these activities can be a means of developing a child's imagination as a tool of self-discovery. Transcripts of children's play activities and selections from essays, children's books, and poems are used throughout. (FL)

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Language in the Classroom: A Series. 8

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECTATOR ROLE

J.D. Robertson

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FOREWORD

This pamphlet is one of a series, produced as discussion papers by a group of teachers who participated in a graduate course in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Calgary. In development, the papers reflect the method of the boys of Barbiana: each paper has been shaped and tempered, through several stages by the input of the group. In intent, the series reflects the aims of the pamphlets originated by the Writing Across the Curriculum Project Team of the Institute of Education at the University of London, to whom we are indebted for pointing the way.

The series stems from a view that language is central to learning, that teachers can gain insights into their work and into learning by examining the language of the classroom, and that current language theory can be the means to such insights. Further, the series represents a conviction that teachers are in the best position to understand the heuristic role of language in the classroom as well as to assess the needs of children in the schools and that they are the most likely to find solutions for problems in classroom practice. To realize this potential and to extend their influence, teachers need to offer their ideas and experiences freely and be willing to consider the ideas of their colleagues openly. It is in this spirit of sharing that these pamphlets are published.

We are grateful to Al Kahanoff, Principal of Branton Junior High School in Calgary for his generous editorial assistance and for his help in seeing the pamphlets through publication.

We also wish to thank Miss Lorraine Cockle for the cover design.

James Britton
Merron Chorny

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SPECTATOR ROLE

J. D. Robertson

"Informing people, instructing people, persuading people, arguing, explaining, planning, setting-forth the pros and cons and coming to a conclusion - these are participant uses of language, uses of language to get things done. Make-believe play, day-dreaming aloud, chatting about our experiences, gossip, travellers' tales and other story-telling fiction, the novel, drama, poetry - these are uses of language in the spectator role..."

J. Britton, Language and Learning

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And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Genesis 8:21

Occasionally a mother who has always lived a great deal in her imagination and who is delighted to find how imaginative her child is overfills him with stories, and they both live for hours in fairyland. The games and stories that the other children make up are poor in comparison to hers. The child may be weaned away from his interest in real people and things and have a harder time later adjusting to the world. I don't mean that a mother should be afraid of fairy stories or of a little makebelieve but only that it should be in moderation."

Benjamin Spock, Baby and Child Care

From the beginning to the present there has been a healthy respect for the power of imagination. And as with all things relating to power there is an underlying fear. For an uncontrolled element of power is a potential danger capable of giving birth to unimaginable horrors. So, examine some activity working entirely in the realm of the imagination.

...../2

SEGMENT OF A TRANSCRIPTION OF TWO CHILDREN AT PLAY

Rosalind: 4.6 years

Stephanie: 3.11 years

(Transcription in capitals is said falsetto)

RE: YOU MEATBALL HEAD

S: I'M NOT THAT

R: YES, YOU ARE.

S: No, I'm not. That's you that did it.

R: NO, YOU DID. HUMPH!

S: I DIDN'T DO IT.

R: Just pretend, okay? YOU DID THAT?

S: YES

R: SO WHY DID YOU DO THAT?

S: BECAUSE. Here

R: NOW MAKE IT MADLISH. Mm.
WHAT ARE YOU EVER DOING? I SHOULD
GET DRESSED WITH MY DRAGGY AND MY PRINCESS HAT.
OH BOY. IS THAT EVER A PRINCESS HAT.

(transcription by D. Robertson)

Neither God nor Dr. Spock could be against that. The evil of "meat-ball head" is an imagined character expressing anger in a phrase that has been manufactured for the occasion from a variety of previous experiences. The unreal situation of spilling the tea at the party attended by a couple of princesses, dressed in fifteen-year-old bridesmaid's gowns is based solidly on reality that can be evoked simply by changing the pitch of the voice. But, of course, this is not what God and Dr. Spock are against. Nor are they against this:

> Pooh began to feel a little more comfortable, because, when you are a Bear of Very Little Brain; and you Think of Things, you find sometimes that a Thing which seemed very Thingish inside you is quite different when it gets out in the open and has other people looking at it... pg. 244
>
> "Isn't it a very Grand thing to be an Afternoon, what you said?"
> "A what?" said Christopher Robin lazily, as he listened to something else.
> "On a horse," explained Pooh.
> "A Knight?"
> "Oh, was that it?" said Pooh. "I thought it was a _____Is it as Grand as a King and Factors and all the other things you said?"
> "Well, it's not as grand as a King," said Christopher Robin, and then, as Pooh seemed disappointed, he added quickly, "but it's grander than Factors."
> "Could a Bear be one?"
> "Of course he could!" said Christopher Robin. "I'll make you one."
> And he took a stick and touched Pooh on the shoulder, and said, "Rise, Sir Pooh de Bear, most faithful of all my Knights."
> So Pooh rose and sat down and said, "Thank you," which is the proper thing to say when you have been made a Knight...
>
> So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the forest, a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.
>
> (pp. 311-314)
>
> A.A. Milne, The World of Pooh, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, 1926.

But, that's where Christopher Robin and Winnie the Pooh are supposed

...../4

to stay, "in the enchanted place on the top of the Forest." If they turn up in a high school classroom, a graduate student seminar or, if you can imagine, a boardroom, all the evils God and Dr. Spock have imagined have come to pass. So, imagination becomes insight, spectators become participants and play becomes work. Of course, we don't go about making the change as brutally as was done in the past.

> For Locke childhood was a mistake of nature, a universal disorder, an oversight by the Creator. This mistake had to be rectified and the sooner the better! If it is forever impossible for children to be born omniscient Lockes, let us make them into Lockes in the shortest time - by the fifth or sixth year of their life! Naturally, as a result of this presumptious attitude toward the real needs and tastes of children, Locke condemned without mercy all existing children's books, ballads, poetry, fantasies, fairy tales, proverbs, and songs, which, in his opinion, were bade because they were neither geography nor algebra. All of children's literature, vital to the child as air, Locke called triviality, labeling it without hesitation "a useless trumpery," and recommending for children's reading only one book - Aesop's."
>
> pp. 110-111
>
> K. Chukovasky, From Two to Five, U of Cal. Press, Berkeley, 1968.

We do it gradually, with infinite subtlety:

> The novel, especially one which deals with the contemporary adolescent culture, is important in illuminating the present for young people, linking it with one of the basic motivations for reading in adolescence: the search for identity. At the junior high school level, a student's personal experiences are limited. Yet it is what he does and suffers and feels that molds his personality and in part determines his life style. The novel offers a student a variety of experiences which he may never actually encompass personally. Through identification with the characters in a novel, he can bring into clearer focus his self image, maintaining at the same time, a detachment which allows him to take an objective view rarely possible in real life until long after events have taken place. Thus the novel provides many students with a chance to "try on" different roles which may help them to clarify their own.
>
> "The Novel in Jr. High School," Alberta Secondary Language Arts Handbook

In presenting this course, teachers are asked to keep constantly in mind the objectives of literature instruction. Remembering always that any good literature selection is a revelation of some aspect of life and the presentation of the artist's insights into its significance, the teacher must treat the selection in such a manner that the pupil is confronted with as many of the levels of meaning as he can grasp. Literature instruction must seek always to develop the student's powers of critical examination and interpretation. This can only be done when the teacher is constantly aware of the four following major objectives of the teaching of literature:

1. To develop the ability to read ... develop the ability to read critically and creatively...

2. To develop self-understanding and a balanced perspective of life. Good literature read with the necessary reflection confronts the pupil with the ideas, perceptions, and understandings of some of the world's most illuminated thought and causes him to examine the workings of his own mind - the beliefs, prejudices, and preconceptions which he has imbibed from his environment.

3. To develop an understanding of the relationship between the ideas contained in a piece of literature and the form in which they are expressed.

4. To develop the understanding and appreciation that literature is not life but one person's view of it.

"English Literature 11," Secondary Language Arts Handbook

Fiction, like food, is of different nutritive values. Some is rich in protein and vitamins; it builds bone and sinew. Some is highly agreeable to the taste but not permanently sustaining. Some may be adulterated and actually harmful to our health. Escape fiction is of the latter two sorts. The harmless kind bears frankly on the fact of it what it is. It pretends to be nothing else than pleasant diversion and never asks to be taken seriously. The second kind masquarades under the appearance of interpretation. It pretends to give a faithful treatment of life as it is, perhaps even thinks that it does so, but through its shallowness it subtly falsifies life in every line. Such fiction, taken seriously and without corrective, may give us false notions of reality and lead us to expect from experience what experience does not provide.

Laurence Perrine, Story and Structure, pg. 7

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So, what began as a child's natural pleasure in utilizing imagination becomes a useful tool for self discovery, is transformed into a prescription for perception of reality and ends up as a dose of salts to eliminate all contaminations of joy. All this in the name of literature, making it bring the imagination under tight control.

But the progression of containment of the imagination is under considerable re-examination. First, "make believe" or "pretending" can be easily observed in children as having a major role in their play. That they spend so much time in this form of play must be some kind of indicator that it has some value.

Segment of a transcription of two children at play.

Rosalind: 4.6 years

Stephanie: 3.11 years

R: (falsetto) I'm gonna tear your leotards. (normal) You better not or else youtre gonna get in trouble. I'm goona spank you.
S: Her
R: Mm hm
S: Cause she said a bad word, she's not allowed in school. Right.
R: Right. I'm gonna put it on that in case you throw up. Maybe she's sick...
S: Right.
R: Well, if you throw up, throw up in your hat (giggle)
S: Her. (giggle)
R: Yuh
S: She can't look anything.
R: Yes. (Stephanie giggling)
I'm making a know in it. Okay.
S: I can't even see the yes.
R: No. Cause I covered it.
S: Right
R: Good. Now when she throws up, she throws up in there.
S: In the hat.
R: I can see some coming....I better get it a little tighter...Can you see it coming?
S: Yes. (pause)
R: Oh! it....and some is running out. I better go and get a Kleenex! I better hurry! (Leaves the room. Out of the room to mother:) My dolly is throwing up! Returns making phoney puffing noises) Oh! Ugh! It's good that I got it.

S: My baby frowed up.
R: Your real baby?
S: Yes
R: Why?
S: Cause
R: Cause what?
S: Cause he would. You know what?
Cause he drank too much milk.
And now he's not throwing up.
R: Today did he throw up?
S: No
R: When?
S: A long, long time ago. When I was just about four before Alexis - that when Alexis was just about (?) throw up. And he did. Throw up in my book.
R: That's dumb.
S: Yes, it's dumb.
R: Ugh! Was it full of milk?
S: Yes.
R: Was it white or red?
S: Mm. white. It should be red but I know it's...guess what, uh it's, it's, gonna be, it's white.
R: Well maybe this baby is, is really always throwing up. Are you? (Falsetto) Yes. (Spanking sounds) You dumb baby. She has to go to Junior. Junior bus, where are you? (deep voice) I'm here. Is there a Junior baby? (normal) Yes and she's already throwing up. (deep voice) Oh no. We can't have that in the bus! (normal) And keep her in Junior. 'By Dumb baby!

(transcription by D. Robertson)

This nasty bit of make-believe interrupted by some memories can be subjected to popular psychology quite easily. The play, being directed by Rosalind, centres on throwing up because it is a new phenomenon to her, being recently recovered from flu during which time she became quite adept at throwing up. This fascination transforms into another, that of being demoted from kindergarten to Junior Hall nursery, a threat which seems to have been employed in the kindergarten. Stephanie, meanwhile, responds in the appropriate manner and adds her own imaginative piece - her baby brother has never thrown up in her presence. But, such an occurrance fits the situation

...../8

nicely so it is introduced. On another level the children are pretending to be parents, teachers and bus drivers - the strongest controlling forces in their lives. And they are enjoying that control, even to the point of being able to accomplish the highest act of bravery children can witness their parents performing - cleaning up their children's vomit.

But, on a purely abstract level of observation, these children are accomplishing the greatest of human feats. They are controlling their lives through their language. Their talk varies in quantity and in quality but it flows continuously and in doing so, it creates a comprehensible world in which things can be made to happen. On a more poetic level, another writer sees it this way:

> "Everybody's young days are a dream, a delightful insanity, a miraculous confusion of poetry and practical activity in which nothing has a fixed shape and nothing has a fixed price. 'Fact' and'non-fact' are still indistinct. To act is to make a bargain with events, there are obscure longings, there are desires and choices, but their objects are imperfectly discerned, everything is 'what it turns out to be.' And to speak is to make images. For, although we spend much of our early days learning the symbolic language of practical intercouse... this is not the language with which we begin as children. Words in everyday use are not signs with fixed and invariable usages; they are poetic images. We speak an heroic language of our own invention, not merely because we are moved, not by the desire to communicate but by the delight of utterance. (Oakeshott, 1959, p. 61)
>
> J. Britton, Language and Learning.

Another researcher places this activity inside a framework of language use that sees make-believe play inside the context of the two great activities of life, being a participant in events and being a spectator of events.

> ... Let us say, as we began to say in looking at make-believe play, that in contemplating the new (the experience of which we are spectators)

we are more than usually concerned with our total world view. We may expand this statement in three ways, all of them I believe relevent.

1. It indicates a concern to incorporate the new into the total. Since this is essentially a matter of organizing (organizing the new and reorganizing the total, each in the light of the other) it does not seem surprising that we should choose a way of using language that puts more than usual stress upon its forms, and that we should concern ourselves with the formal arrangements of events, ideas, feelings.

2. It indicates an underlying concern for our ability to anticipate events: our world representation in the storehouse of our expectations about the future. That we should enjoy entering into other people's experiences, and imaginary experiences, and working upon our own, reflects our concern to explore to the limits the possibilities of experience. Moreover, as material from which to predict, the patterns taken by events are more powerful than their random particularities.

3. It indicates an underlying concern not only for life but also for the person who lives it: the view of the world with which we face each new encounter must be, as far as possible, one we can 'live with.' The kind of reorganization of the total that the new will demand, to satisfy this requirement, will be predominantly re-evaluation; a modification of the way our feelings are organized. Hence, the importance of the opportunity to savour feelings, of the attention to the formal arrangement of feelings, and of a use of language (as for example in poetry) in which feeling is expressed by the manipulation of linguistic forms.

Informing people, instructing people, persuading people, arguing, explaining, planning, setting-forth the pros and cons and coming to a conclusion - these are participant uses of language, uses of language to get things done. Make-believe play, day-dreaming aloud, chatting about our experiences, gossip, travellers' tales and other story-telling, fiction, the novel, drama, poetry - these are uses of language in the spectator role.... (pp. 121-2)

J. Britton, Language and Learning

It is in the spectator role that we spend a considerable part of our lives. And it is in this role that we make sense of our lives. Human history has acknowledged this fact, although it may not have been able to articulate it.

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The long tradition of fairy tales, with their violence, cruelty and endless love have the essence of the spectator role hidden in them in terms appropriate to a child. But in a world modified by the infant sciences of psychology and sociology, this concept has had to be rediscovered.

> If we do not live just from moment to moment but try to be conscious of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in life. It is well known that many people lose the will to live because such meaning evades them. An understanding of the meaning of life is not suddenly acquired at the age of chronological maturity, or at any particular age. On the contrary, gaining this understanding is what constitutes having attained psychological maturity. This achievement is the result of a long development, wisdom is built up, small step by small step, from most irrational beginnings. Unfortunately, too many parents want their children's minds to function as their own do - as if a child's understanding of himself and the world did not have to develop as slowly as his body does. To find meaning in life, the child must become able to transcend the confines of a self-centred existence and believe that he will make a significant contribution - if not right now, then at some future time. This belief is necessary if he is to be satisfied with himself and with what he is doing; only hope for the future can sustain us in the adversities we unavoidably encounter.
>
> ... nothing in the entire range of "children's literature" - with rare exceptions - can be as enriching and as satisfying to the child and adult alike as the folk fairy tale. True, fairy tales teach little overtly about the specific condition of life in modern mass society, these tales were created long before modern society came into being. But from them a child can learn more about the inner problems of man, and about solutions to his own (and our) predicaments in any society, than he can from any other type of story within his comprehension... He needs ... a moral education that subtly, by implication only, conveys to him the advantages of moral behavior, not through abstract ethical concepts but through that which seems tangibly right and therefore has meaning to him ...
>
> B. Bettleheim, "The Uses of Enchantment."

Knight, with Umbrella

The difficulty with all
Forms of heroism
Is that they require
Appropriate occasions

And that these are rarer
Even than heroes
Consequently, the hero
Waits and waits,
Exquisitely aware
Of the absence of any
Heroic way
To mail a letter,
Buy theatre tickets
Or put on rubbers.

Most remarkable about
The older heroes
Is their luck in encountering
Punctual dragons
Compliantly belligerent
And maidens regularly
Requiring rescue.
I observe all this
A little bitterly,
Shivering
In rented armor
On an icy corner
Late for the costume
Party, and reflecting
How long one waits
These days
Even for a cab.

E. Olson, Olson's Penny Arcade

Many others have commented on the significance of play generally in the total growth of people.

> The primary dimension of growth seems to be a movement from the center of the self outward. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that the self enlarges, assimilating the world to itself and accommodating itself to the world, as Piaget puts it ... In moving outward from himself, the child becomes more himself.
>
> J. Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse

> This gives us our indication for theraputic procedure - to afford opportunity for formless experience, and for creative impulses, motor and sensory, which are the stuff of playing. And on the basis of playing is built the whole of a man's experiential existence. No longer

...../12

are we either introvert or extrovert. We experience life in the area of transitional phenomena, in the exciting interweave of subjectivity and objective observation, and in an area that is intermediate between the inner reality of the individual and the shared reality of the world that is external to individuals.

D. Winnicott, Playing and Reality

In general, the series of studies and observations are part of our general research programme on daydreaming raise the question of the importance of varied environmental stimulation in forming the basis for fantasy development. The impression gained seems contrary to the classical psychoanalytic formulations which stress imagination as arising from instinctual sources that have been blocked from expression. It seems more likely that the child who engages in fantasy play is not necessarily withdrawing from "real" life or responding defensively to inner instinctual promptings. It may be more likely that he is actually exploring his environment visually and the continuing his exploration in play. Curiosity, pleasure in development of imaginative skill, and some defensiveness may all combine to foster fantasy play as a strong disposition in a given child...

The parent then, in permitting free play and free exploration, establishes a basic atmosphere in which the child can maximize his effective experiences of interest and joy through a series of detailed discriminations. If such discriminations are also incorporated in fantasy play, they become more and more the stuff of a richly sensitive inner experience.

The daydreams of the adolescent are a basic part of his growth process. If the adolescent can effect some combination of actual achievement with the continuation of a varied and increasingly elaborate, but partially reality-oriented day-dream life, he can move into adult life armed with a significant skill with important adaptive potential.

I am more inclined to believe that complex associational possibilities necessary for creative thought occur in dreams and fantasies almost by chance and that truly creative work comes in the willingness and effort to explicate such material.

J. L. Singer, Daydreaming

At this point, it becomes possible to see the place of the spectator - the one who permits his imagination and previous experience to shape his concepts of his total experience, past and present. The first obvious place

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for utilizing and for developing that side of us which is the spectator is in the extension of the make believe play which children employ naturally for its own inherent rewards.

Let us look now at some of the opportunities, and some of the demands, of drama. First of all, it allows children to employ their own views of life and people, use their own standards of evaluation, exercise their own terms when expressing and tempering these ideas.

It also subjects children to the demand to communicate clearly and specifically both in discussion of the ideas, and the dramatic expression of them. The linguistic demands alone may range from academic discussion of a factual point, to an emotional outburst such as a king in defence of his kingdom might make (public language) or a tramp at the door of a rich man, justifying his existence might be called upon to make (private language).

In small groups, all people whether children or adults, wise men or foolish, verbal or non-verbal types, employ the taking of roles (sometimes through individual day-dreaming, reliving of situations, reading of books, watching television and films) when it best serves the ends they require. To harness this to the classroom learning situation would obviously be common sense, even at some loss of the individual's ability to do what he pleases when he pleases. Rules do not restrict, they aid, if they are good and pertinent rules. The old fashioned (and false) rules of theatre such as 'face the front,' must be replaced with rules which artists have always employed when creating such as

"use your ideas and talents honestly, serving the discipline of the medium."

There is no 'free' art and there can be no 'free' drama. Instead there is a discipline which once respected frees the individual to discover all the possibilities within that discipline....

Dorothy Heathcote, "Drama"

... as soon as we place a man in his environment, with his prejudices, attitudes and hopes, the world is our oyster in study terms. This is why dramatic improvisation is of such value to us, and yet so confusing, for selectivity must be used and this is a great difficulty for many teachers.

... As pictures need pigment and surface, drama uses the six elements of stillness, movement, silence, sound, darkness, light, in every possible combination and gradation. These six elements are the only means of communication in the medium ...

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... Remember to keep in the forefront of your mind this maxim: Drama is not stories retold in action. Drama is human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges.

Dorothy Heathcote, "Improvisation."

The nickname Deacon stuck to me until, in one of the rest camps, word went out that an impromptu show was being organized, and men were called on to volunteer if they would do something to amuse the troops. With a gall that now staggers me, I forced myself to offer an imitation of Charlie Chaplin, whom I had seen exactly twice in film shows for the troops behind the lines. I managed to get the right kind of hat from a Frenchman in the nearby village, I cut myself a little cane from a bush, and when the night came I put on a burnt-cork moustache and shuffled onto the platform; for twelve minutes I told the dirtiest jokes I knew, attaching them to the officers - including the chaplain - and all the men who had some sort of public character. I now blush at what I remember of what I said, but I drew heavily on the repertoire of Milo Papple and was astonished to find myself a great hit. Even the former vaudevillian (who could sing "If You Were the Only Girl in the World and I were the Only Boy" in a baritone - and - falsetto duet with himself) was less admired. And from that time forth I was called, not "Deacon" but "Charlie."

What really astonished me was the surprise of the men that I could do such a thing. "Jesus, the Old Deacon, eh - getting off that hot one about the major, eh? Jesus, and that riddle about Cookie, eh? Jesus!" They could hardly conceive that anybody who read the Testament would be other than a Holy Joe - could have another, seemingly completely opposite side to his character. I cannot remember a time when I did not take it as understood that everybody has at least two, if not twenty-two, sides to him. Their astonishment was what astonished me. Jesus, eh? People don't look very closely at other people, eh? Jesus!

R. Davies, Fifth Business (pp. 65-6)

These dramatic explorations of the spectator role employ a full range of speaking and listening skills. Indirectly they may also involve the skills of reading and writing. However, these may be approached as entities in themselves. For writing, the old title, "Creative" doesn't really apply. What a student does in these writings is more identifying than creating. The materials are all there, inside. However, the materials

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need to be re-examined, rearranged, re-evaluated. And when these things are done, a new meaning may have emerged. This method of finding something new by sorting everything old is often done effectively through writing. It may be a "one shot effort" or it may involve the perspiration and agony of finding the only phrase in which the idea can live properly. Either way, the movement of the idea from the mind to the page is through a distance of infinite magnitude. And the only effective way of shortening that infinite distance is through the act of writing as often as possible.

AN INDIAN BOY

If I were an Indian Boy
I'd roam through the desert
And throw my wolf skin into the air
And listen to the buffalo.

Pamela Taylor, 8
Beaupre Public School
Onoway, Alberta

SHOES

New shoes
Muddy shoes
Ripped shoes
Dirty shoes
Torn shoes
No shoes

And your mother kills you.

Doug Troupe, 7
O'Connor Drive Public School
Toronto, Ontario

COURAGE

Courage is when
you ask your grandfather to show you his false teeth.

And when he does
you wish you had never looked into his
empty mouth.

Katherine Clarke, 8
St. Vincent Euphrasia School
Meaford, Ontario.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Sometimes when I'm bored
I read my chenille bedspread
like a blind man reads braille,
or let my toes mull the dogmas
of ancient pebbles, who
in their lifetimes
have known a thousand shoeless feet.
Sometimes I bury my face
in the moist lap of the sky
and find company there,
a box of blackbird raisins
milking glass wool clouds
with feathered swoops.
Sometimes I lie as still
as bark on a tree
and fearfully think
that if Jesus
ever walked up to me on the street
I would not recognize Him,
and be speechless

Gerilyn Shand, 19
Barrington Municipal High School
Barrington Passage
Nova Scotia

FINDING LOVE

The thin smoke stings my eyes;
my fingers, like beings, in search of you.
It is doubtful, coming here by night,
that I shall return by you
in the same shape as I came.
We look alike, sometimes
lying side by side, love's own posture
but all an empty stake.

I waver like a child
having fled the sea. It is not
what I expected, the dark fires,
the sullen turn of ground. Everything must learn
How I have dreamed it:
a misshapen thought, or else,
a darkness forever without a name.

From my bed I could hear
the ripe wound open, the thick sea
pouring in. I told you, then,
the first lie I had in my heart;
the carcass of a dull animal
slipped between our sights.

Gerilyn Shand, 19
Barrington Municipal High School
Barrington Passage, Nova Scotia

What is it in me
That makes me write these lines?
To wake the morning after
And look down to find,
My inside out
On a plain white sheet,
Tales of madness
And my soul's defeat.
How is it
That all this can stay,
Within my self
Until some contemplative day?
When boiling up
It comes rushing out,
And falls to my pen
So words might reach out.
Those trying nights
When I look within,
My heart a balloon
My pencil the pin.
And here I lie
Inadequately expressed,
Seeing myself
Soulfully undressed.
What is it in me
That makes these lines I write?
My inside out,
On a plain sheet of white.

Kim Symons, 15
Westwood Collegiate
Winnipeg, Manitoba

But where does that leave grammar, usage, syntax, spelling? Right where they've always been - rules that are designed to make meanings clear. If the meanings are clear, the rules are being well served. If the meanings aren't clear, some attention must be paid to achieving clarity.

And what about the world of work? How much airy-fairy soul searching can a pump jockey use? Probably more than an executive assistant because the jockey has more time to disengage his mind from a mechanical activity to enjoy the spectacle of his world. Unfortunately for the busy executive assistant, he misses the advantage of being able to step back from his activities to gain a clearer perception of himself, his world and their relations with each other.

As for the fact that "They can't write" the only reply is that they can, if it's worth writing and if they've had many experiences writing what was worthwhile. A written analysis of a famous short story may be worthwhile if such a close scrutiny of a piece of fiction can be seen as something more than an academic trick that, once mastered, never need be repeated again. Writing a report on the production of concrete in Alberta may be worthwhile if an examination of this obscure object can be seen as an unseen influence on a large number of lives rather than as just a load of wet cement.

As for giving and taking directions, explaining, informing, defending and attacking - all those easily labelled writing activities of people who are participating directly in an activity - they become relatively easy. Their relative ease arises from the fact that mastery of the writing in the spectator role is often abstract, indefinite, general and nonspecific. These

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elements are very difficult to control. But, once they are controlled, the concrete, definite, particular and specific needs of participant-type writing are more easily served.

The position of the reader as a spectator is so obvious, it may seem like a ludicrous subject to explore. However, since the majority of literature exists in the spectator role, it can be expected that this particular role is as complex as the body of literature itself.

> ... In all the forms of fantasy, whether dreams, day-dreams, private musings or make-believe play, we give expression to perfectly real preoccupations, fears and desires, however bizarre or impossible the imagined events embodying them.
>
> The imaginery spectatorship of fantasy and make-believe play has the special feature of allowing us to look on at ourselves, ourselves as participants in the imagined events - the hero in the rescue fantasy, the victim of the assault, the defendant rebutting unjust accusations, the apparent nonentity suddenly called to national responsibility. In spite, however, of seeing himself as a participant in the story, the day dreamer as the child engaged in make-believe remains an onlooker, too, in all his waking fantasy he normally fills the dual role of participant and spectator, and as spectator he can when need be turn away from the fantasy events and attend again to the demands of real life...
>
> ... fantasy only highlights what is true of all fiction, that it is a convention of communication. The full grasp of fiction as fiction is a sophisticated achievement. Children come to it gradually ... Fiction has to be seen, then, as a convention for enlarging the scope of the discussions we have with each other about what may befall.
>
> The basic process connecting the onlooker with any event, real or fictional, involving living things is that of imagining. The fundamental fact is that we can imagine ourselves in a situation very different from the one we are in, we can create images of the sensations we should have, we can become aware, in part, of the meanings we should see in it, what our intentions, attitudes and emotions should be, what satisfactions and frustrations we should experience.
>
> What is sometimes called wish-fulfillment in novels and plays can, therefore, more plausibly be described as wish-formulation or the definition of desires...

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It seems nearer the truth, therefore, to say that fiction contributes to defining the reader's or spectator's values, and perhaps stimulating his desires, rather than to suppose that they gratify desire by some mechanism of vicarious experience. In this respect they follow the pattern, not of the dream with its hallucinated experiencing, but of waking supposition and imagination - 'Wouldn't it be wonderful if ...' 'Wouldn't it be sad if....'

... It is an elementary form of onlooking merely to imagine what the situation must be like and to react with the participant. The more complex observer imagines something of what the participant is experiencing and then reacts to him, for instance with pity or joy on his account. The spectators who watch Othello as he kills his wife are not feeling simply what they imagine him to be feeling, they are also feeling, as onlookers, pity for him.

D.W. Harding, "Psychological Processes in the Reading of Fiction." (a paper to the British Society of Aesthetics on 10th Oct. 1961)

The fantasy elements have often been called 'wish fulfillment.' That term is unsatisfactory, an hyperbole masquarading as a literal statement. No wish is literally fulfilled. Night dreams sometimes provide hallucinated wish fulfillment but readers of fiction and the audience at plays are not in this hallucinated condition, however absorbed they may be. More accurately, they and the author are engaged in wish formulation or definition, these wishes are stated and their fulfillment contemplated in imagination. This is a perfectly familiar process in everyday conversation, starting well back in childhood with the formula 'Wouldn't it be lovely if...'

(The) dramatization or melodramatisation of ordinary activity emerges imperceptibly with the effect of fiction in stimulating make believe, especially in younger children, for whom lurking in a doorway to pounce out on a friend can become the re-enactment of a Wells Fargo adventure. At a later stage role imitation can occur when the boy meets Sherlock Holmes for the first time,becomes an astute detective in his ordinary life. Through subtler forms of this mechanism fiction can contribute to the search for identity or role definition that Erikson regards as a crucial task at the stage of adolescence. It allows you to try on various personalities, each of which selectively emphasizes some feature or potentiality of your developing self.

... there is no reason to suppose that we cease to be 'mere spectators' when the experience presented seems continuous with ours; it is some kind of continuity between our own experience

and what we read about that gives comprehensibility and value to the writer's work...

D.W. Harding, "Considered Experience: The Inviation to the Novel."

Eventually, when the devices and uses of the spectator role have been explored for all the advantages they can bestow on the student, he may be ready to explore the function of the role itself. He may be inspired to extend his control over his own perception to attempting to control the perceptions of others. Of course, if he has gotten deeply involved in the various reflections of the spectator role, of which literature is the dominant one, he will be exercising this control. But exercising the control in a consciously predetermined manner moves the student toward concepts such as these:

> Needless to say there is nothing wrong with completely idiosyncratic interpretations of anything, poems, pictures, music, clouds or coal-fires. But if that is all we want there is no need of authors and artists; we could just as well take a benzedrine tablet and sit down with a Rorschach blot or a picture from the Thematic Apperception Test and let our imagination loose. Understanding in the reader and intelligibility in the author are essential to a literature and involve obligations in both ...
>
> "Reader and Author"

> The facts have been summed up by Paul Voltry when he describes the composition of Le Cimetiere Marin and speaks of 'my attempts, my gropings, inner decipherings, those imperious verbal illuminations which suddenly impose a particular combination of words - as though a certain group possessed some kind of intrinsic power... I nearly said some kind of will to live, quite the opposite of the "freedom" or chaos of the mind, a will that can sometimes force the mind to deviate from its plan and the poem to become quite other than what it was going to be.' (The Art of Poetry, London, 1958).
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> "The Hinterland of Thought"
>
> D.W. Harding, Experience into Words; Essays on Poetry, Chato & Windus, London, 1963.

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The pinnacle we have then achieved is the one toward which English teachers have always struggled. We got there, however, not by prescribing "good" literature, not by decrying "bad" literature, not by anthologizing all literature, not by popularizing great literature. Hopefully, then, we have helped to create neither the self-effacing clod nor the overpowering snob, both of whom have learned the same thing:- that novels, poetry, drama, essays, all the expressions of the spectator role are to be feared. Their fear confines them to the easily controlled present while the same fear encourages them to bully the mysteries of literature into submission instead of gaining a comfortable friendship with them. Without fear, 'the classics' can be seen as multi-layered expressions of innumerable experiences while "modern literature" can be seen as potentially the same thing. We then can see some significance for this day in our lives as we can see significance in this life in our history.

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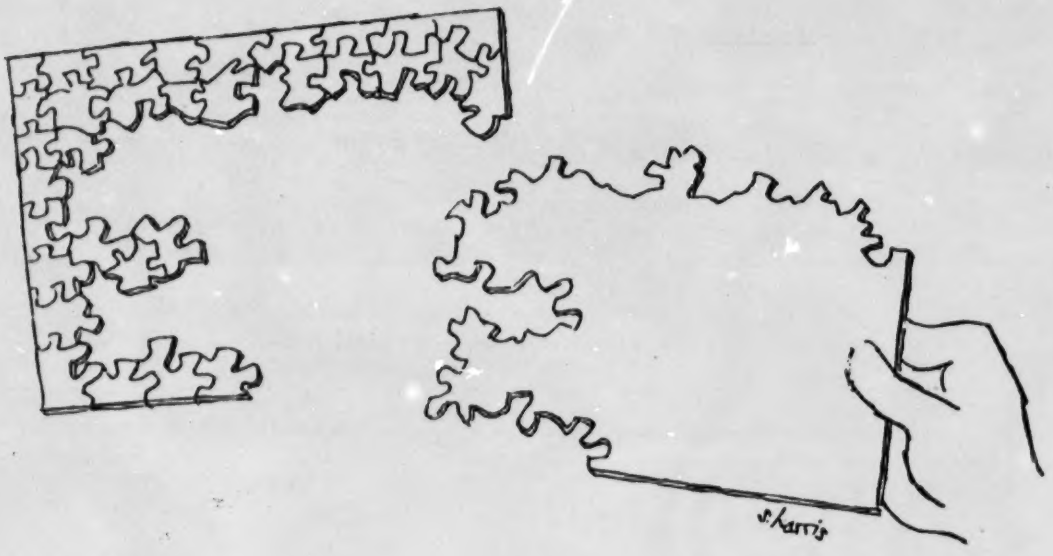
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